

Iowa Commission on Volunteer Service (ICVS)

Quarterly Report:

July 1 – September 30, 2012

DISASTER

Nothing to report this quarter

AMERICORPS

AmeriCorps Disability Inclusion – Member and Program Recruitment: ICVS staff attended the Youth Leadership Forum (YLF) Career Fair in Ames in July. High school and transitioning youth with disabilities attend with their family to learn about options for their working and educational future. This event has been a particularly successful platform for recruitment. At least half a dozen alumni of YLF in attendance at this event are now current or alumnus AmeriCorps members, able to further encourage youth to seriously consider this opportunity.

Iowa Green Corps – ICVS had two AmeriCorps State programs under the Iowa Green Corps umbrella during this quarter, in partnership with the Iowa Power Fund. *Green Iowa AmeriCorps* is operated by the University of Northern Iowa Center for Energy and Environmental Education, with members serving in northeast Iowa to meet the energy efficiency needs of low-income homeowners through home energy audits and weatherization. *Iowa Green Veterans AmeriCorps* program is run by the Department of Natural Resources, recruiting military veterans to serve as members who learn green energy skills to provide home weatherization, and also make disaster-related repairs to state parks. Additionally, two AmeriCorps VISTA members were placed at UNI-CEEE and the City of Dubuque Sustainability Office to support community efforts at reducing poverty through energy efficiency measures.

Funding – In September, the Corporation for National and Community Service made funding available to allow ICVS to fund an additional AmeriCorps program, bringing the total number of funded programs in Iowa to twenty-three, including four planning grants. In September, more than 250 members began serving in Iowa communities. Over the course of the year, we expect these members to be joined by another 400 members to provide more than 500,000 hours of service valued at \$8.6 million (using the value of an Iowa volunteer hour from Independent Sector) to Iowa.

IOWA MENTORING PARTNERSHIP (IMP)

Provider Board – The 2012-2013 Iowa Mentoring Partnership Provider Board completed orientation and their first meeting during this quarter. Members include:

- Barb Biersner, Chair: Youth and Shelter Services, Boone
- Christy Jenkins, Vice Chair: New Opportunities, Carroll
- Ashley Denton, Secretary: TeamMates, Missouri Valley
- Rita Baker: Big Brothers Big Sisters, Newton
- Jerry Drake: Study Connection, Clinton
- Amanda Korenberg: One on One Mentoring, Clear Lake
- Megan Kuhl: TeamMates, Waterloo
- Michelle Raymer: Community! Youth Concepts, Des Moines

Administrative Rules – The Iowa Mentoring Partnership is in process of altering their administrative rules in the Iowa Code in order to further ensure the safety of youth involved in our certified mentoring programs. The proposed updates include requirements for written risk

management policy, protocol for educating youth about good and bad touch, defining safe meeting places, and the promotion of safe, effective screening and match support procedures. The proposed language updates were offered for public comment and hearing, and are now under legislative committee review.

PROMOTION AND RECOGNITION

Iowa Volunteer Hall of Fame – nomination materials were released in August and are due by Nov. 9. The People's Choice Award has been added this year to allow members of the public to vote online for their favorite candidate, who will receive this special new award during the induction ceremony next February.

TRAINING

AmeriCorps Training – North Central National Service Convention – In partnership with America's Service Commissions and Serve Wisconsin, the Iowa Commission on Volunteer Service piloted a regional national service pre-program training model. From August 6 – 8, 160 national service partners from 16 states attended training in Dubuque. This model was developed to adapt to changes in funding appropriation and to continue fostering and leveraging partnership with similar entities in the upper Midwest. Topical tracks were offered to 1) Commissions and Commission staff, 2) AmeriCorps State Program Directors, and 3) Volunteer Centers. Keynote presenters included executive leaders in the national service field from public and private organizations. Results from evaluations indicate that participants improved their ability to improve their organizational functionality, create collection systems for outcome-based performance measures, and leverage professional relationships with their colleagues in a greater geographic range.

New Commissioners – to help them become familiar with the Iowa Commission on Volunteer Service and their responsibilities as commissioners, an orientation session was held August 20 for members appointed by Governor Branstad for three-year terms that started July 1: Jordan DeGree, Dubuque Art Center; Khayree Fitten, ISU Student from Mount Pleasant; Michelle Gowdy, Pioneer Hi-Bred in Johnston; Daniel Weiser, Capitol Strategies Group in Urbandale; Gary Fry, Lions Clubs of Iowa based in Ames.

Crisis Intervention Training – In partnership with Passageway, Inc. and Polk County Health Services, the ICVS Inclusion Coordinator contributed to the development and implementation of a new training on Crisis Intervention, designed for public officials who may be involved in individual mental health crisis response. ICVS intends to adapt this model for delivery to national service stakeholders throughout late 2012 and 2013.

OUTREACH EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES

Skilled Workers Conference – Creston: ICVS attended this event, organized by Iowa Works, to promote AmeriCorps opportunities as a pathway to skilled employment for municipal, non-profit, and higher education institutions.

Coaches Mentoring Challenge – The National Mentoring Partnership has identified 15 million youth in need of a mentor. Thousands of these youth live in Iowa, Kansas and Nebraska. In an effort to help close the gap, University of Iowa Coach Kirk Ferentz, Iowa State Coach Paul Rhoads, University of Northern Iowa Coach Mark Farley, University of Nebraska Coach Bo Pelini, Kansas State Coach Bill Snyder, and Kansas University Coach Charlie Weis have issued a friendly challenge to see which state can recruit the most new mentors. During the 2011 Coaches Challenge, the three states broke all previous records by recruiting 9,896 new mentors. 2012's target goal is 10,104 new mentors to make an even 20,000 new mentors in just two years.

The Coaches' Challenge kicked off on Aug. 1. Any new mentor application received between August 1 and Nov. 30 will count toward the "score" of the respective state. By signing up to be a mentor, fans can not only show their state/team pride, but can help improve the life of a child! The overall winner of the 2012 "Coaches Mentoring Challenge" will be announced the week of December 7th.

As of October 10, 2012, Kansas is in the lead with 2500 mentors, Iowa in second with 1204, and Nebraska in 3rd with 640 new mentors recruited. Mentors will be recruited by individual program activities in the IMP's network of 81 programs, and at one home game at Iowa State, Northern Iowa, and the University of Iowa. Prospective mentors can also sign up online at www.iowamentoring.org.

Volunteer Iowa: A Call to Service – The ICVS (or Volunteer Iowa) was asked to assist the Governor's Office in helping Iowa become the national leader in service and volunteerism by 2015. On Sept. 10, Gov. Branstad and Lt. Gov. Reynolds announced Volunteer Iowa: A Call to Service – an initiative that challenges Iowans to give back to their communities by volunteering at least 50 hours per year. The 50 hour goal is the theme of the marketing campaign piece of the puzzle: (What's Your 50?): Details are available at www.volunteeriowa.org/your50. To assist with the kick-off, on Sept. 10 Lt. Gov. Reynolds participated in a volunteer service activity at Edmunds Academy in Des Moines with students and several AmeriCorps members and on Sept. 13 Gov. Branstad worked alongside ICVS staff completing a service project at Central Iowa Shelter & Services.

State Service Plan Listening Tour – Every three years, the ICVS is required to develop a State Service Plan to guide our efforts to increase volunteerism and national service efforts throughout Iowa. The ICVS is in the process of drafting a new plan for 2013-2016 and in September a listening tour was held to gather public input. Rachel Bruns, Director of Volunteer Wisconsin (and a former ICVS Commissioner), facilitated the listening sessions, which took place in Mason City, Spencer, Lamoni, and Cedar Rapids. Additionally, an online webinar session was held for those who could not take part in one of the in-person meetings and an online survey was also distributed. Feedback from these public listening sessions is being incorporated into the draft State Service Plan, which will be shared with Commissioners and ICVS partners for their comments before a final version of the plan is completed and sent to Governor Branstad for his review and approval.

Visiting Federal Dignitary – Wendy Spencer, CEO of the Corporation for National and Community Service spent several days in Iowa in late September. We were very excited to highlight what Iowa is doing around volunteerism and national service. She visited with a variety of AmeriCorps Programs including the Des Moines Public Schools, Department of Natural Resources Green Veterans AmeriCorps program, and more. There were also numerous meetings with local leaders and legislators. We appreciate Governor Terry Branstad, Congressman Tom Latham, and Congressman Leonard Boswell taking time to meet with Wendy and the Iowa Commission on Volunteer Service. Through Wendy's meetings and visit to Iowa, she left with a great sense of how service is integral to our state and communities.

RESULTS

Learn & Serve – Community Based Grant – The three-year Learn & Serve grant from the Corporation for National and Community Service ended on August 31, 2012. During the grant period, the program (operated by Iowa State University 4H Extension) engaged approximately

6900 students in Service Learning projects that benefitted more than 12,000 Iowans. Over the course of the grant, the project worked with nearly 350 partners and provided training to 98 community organizations. 98.5% of responding partners indicated that the service-learning project made them more interested in working with youth on service/volunteer projects. In addition, 81% of youth participants demonstrated increased civic knowledge which was a statistically significant result. While the federal funding for this grant has ended, ICVS plans to continue working with state partners on advancing service-learning as a way to engaging youth in volunteering and service.

ICVS AmeriCorps VISTA Team – During the last quarter, the ICVS AmeriCorps VISTA Leader Carlie Toland and members Heath Hupke, Sarah Myren, Mary Runkel, and Jessica Martens successfully finished up their year of service. Our summer associate members also completed their terms in August. Summer associates can provide hands-on service that complements our year-long member activities. Some highlights of the summer program include:

- 708 individuals trained
- 1000 disadvantaged youth served
- 4868.5 volunteer hours generated

In July the following year-long AmeriCorps VISTA members began their service:

- Amy Schmitt, serving at Iowa State Extension and Outreach-Linn County in Marion
- Kelsi Daniels, serving at Youth and Shelter Services in Ames and Boone
- Sarah Myers, serving at the Fort Des Moines Museum and Education Center in Des Moines

Additionally, we welcomed our new VISTA Leader, Terrance Scott. Terrance served one AmeriCorps VISTA term at the University of Minnesota and also previously served in a summer AmeriCorps program in New Orleans. We are happy to have him in our office and helping with the AmeriCorps VISTA team.

Recruitment started in September for four to five new VISTA positions for members who will start service in early December.

Iowa Mentoring Partnership

In August, two new programs were certified for the first time:

- The Multicultural Family Center in Dubuque
- Starmont Mentoring Program in Arlington

Certification indicates that the program meets the standards of the Elements of Effective Practice as defined by MENTOR—the National Mentoring Partnership.

Certification lasts for two years provided the program remains in good standing with their quarterly reports.

September 11 National Day of Service and Remembrance – The September 11 Day of Service and Remembrance was supported across Iowa through various non profits and volunteer centers. The majority of the projects focused on celebrating and thanking veterans that have provided tireless dedication in service to our country. September 11, 2001 is a day that is engrained into our memory, and those that gave their lives in service on that day, and the many days, months, years following, live through the generous support and services provided by volunteers giving back to their communities. The ICVS helped support the various organizations that provided volunteer opportunities and helped assist in creating recognition events across the state through the network of volunteer centers.